

Abstract

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is the primary source of state-specific information about health risk behaviors and health status among the states' resident population. In 1986, Massachusetts began participation in the BRFSS and created the Health Survey Program (HSP) with CDC support. Over the next 27 years, HSP has expanded the scope of its BRFSS survey by increasing the sample size, adding state-specific questions, developing and utilizing a complex sample design, and adding cell phone mode to the survey. Today, BRFSS is the cornerstone of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's (MDPH) surveillance and data are used throughout the Department as well as by educational institutions and local organizations addressing public health.

Massachusetts proposes to continue this surveillance with support from CDC. With this support, we will maintain our current sample size and increase the percent of interviews conducted by cell phone, continuing to provide high quality data to address both national and state priorities. We will continue to over-sample large, diverse cities in order to obtain a representative proportion of minority respondents. This will enable us to provide not only state-wide data, but data on some local communities as well.

The Health Survey Program will work with other programs throughout MDPH to analyze this data to assist in departmental efforts to plan and evaluate program interventions, assess disparities, and complete an integrated analysis of the impact of health reform. This data will be disseminated through several channels: our annual data report, provision of the data to programs and policy makers involved in planning and evaluation, inclusion of the data in our online web-based query system, MassCHIP, and providing customized analyses to internal and external requestors.